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A project was undertaken in 1965 in 3 elementary schools in Wayne County School District, Utah, to determine if students entering small, rural schools have cultural disadvantages and, if so, to develop materials and procedures to meet such deficiencies. Pretesting revealed significant differences in vocabulary development and experiential background compared to an urban control population. Programs designed to improve instruction were developed in areas of parent-teacher communication, instructional excursions, pupil-team specialties, resource utilization, and individualized reading instruction. Second- and third-year evaluations of the project showed significant gains in vocabulary growth and reading achievement. One elementary school made extensive use of the amplified telephone and established companion schools in New Mexico and New York City to offset the disadvantages of isolation. Materials developed in the course of the project are described. (JH)

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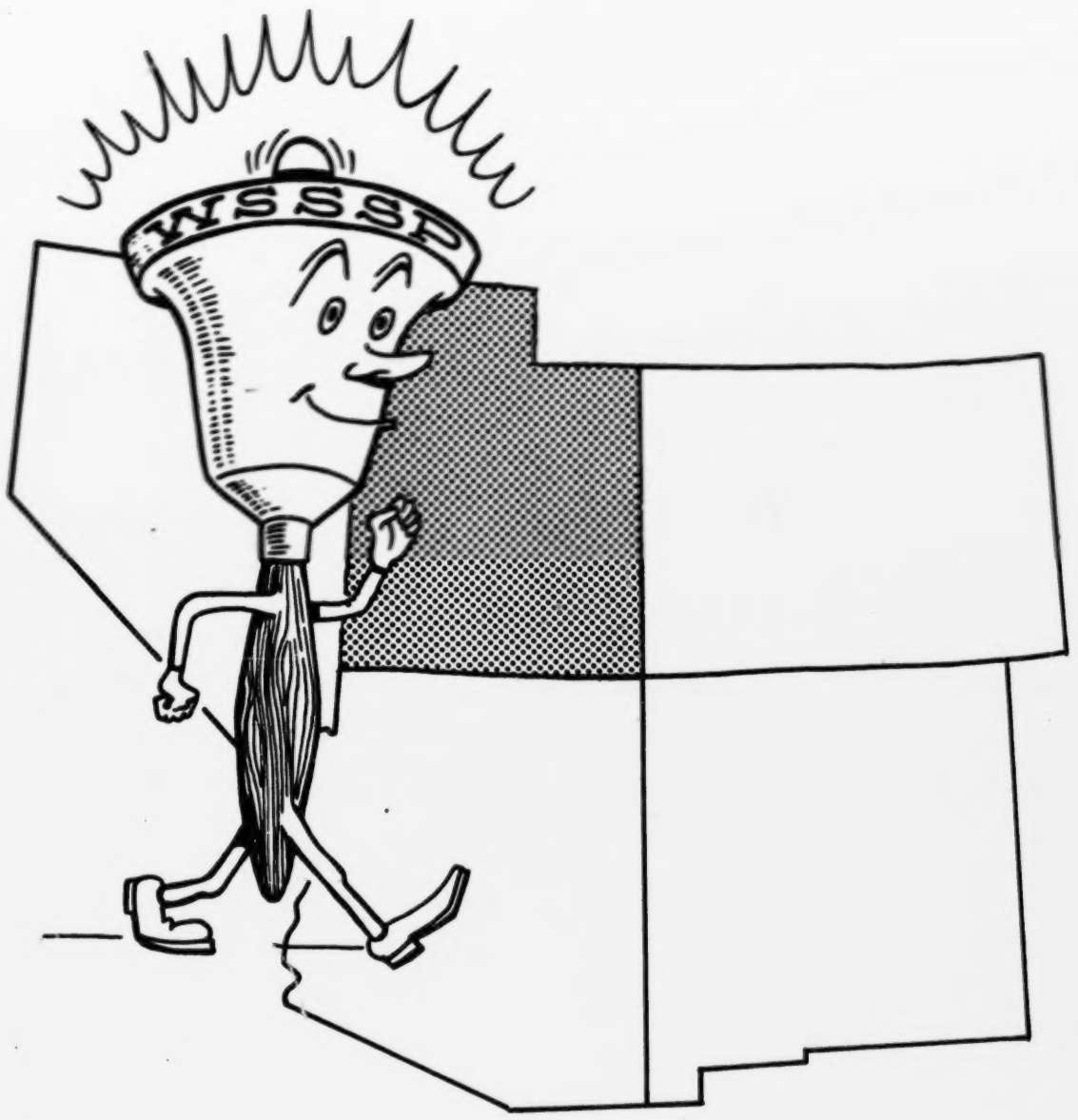
SOME APPROACHES TO OVERCOMING CULTURAL DEPRIVATION IN STUDENTS ENTERING SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS



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SOME APPROACHES TO MEETING CULTURAL DEPRIVATION IN STUDENTS ENTERING SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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A Diverse Capacity Project of the
Western States Small Schools Project
For Utah

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The project is indebted to the Superintendent of Wayne County School District and to the principals, staffs and students of the three Wayne County elementary schools for their splendid cooperation.

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A REPORT ON A PROJECT "TO EXPLORE APPROACHES TO MEETING THE PROBLEM OF EARLY CULTURAL DEPRIVATION IN SMALL, RURAL SCHOOLS"

INTRODUCTION

When the Western States Small Schools Project was refunded by the Ford Foundation in 1965, one of the diverse capacity projects undertaken by WSSSP for Utah was that to determine if students entering a small, rural school have, in fact, cultural disadvantages related to their experiential background and, if so, to organize curriculum and procedures to meet, in the school, such deficiencies.

This project was operated in Wayne County School District in south central Utah. Wayne County has a total population of about 1610 (est. 1966) with a total school enrollment of 497 pupils in one high school and three elementary schools. This population occupies a portion of the 2400 square miles in Wayne County. The communities are small, the largest with a population of about 350. They are isolated from major population areas and transportation systems. The nearest large population center is over 150 miles distant, and no railroad, airline, nor national highway serves the county. Agriculture, mainly stock raising, lumbering and tourism are the principal means of livelihood.

It is obvious that the children in Wayne County came to school with quite different experiential backgrounds from that of children raised in an urban area. They have fewer toys, more pets; fewer experiences with books, more responsibility for the operation of the home; less exposure to modern marketing and transportation systems, more exposure to nature.

The project was designed to be operational in the three elementary schools in Wayne County: Bicknell Elementary School, Hanksville Elementary School, and Loa Elementary School. Bicknell has an enrollment of 111 students served by a professional staff of 6; Hanksville has 32 students with 2 teachers; and Loa has 105 students and a staff of 6.

THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project was threefold:

1. To identify the degree and type of cultural disadvantagement primary grade children in the Wayne County Schools experience.
2. On the basis of the findings to organize curriculum and procedures to aid in greater development of the potentials of each child in the primary grades of Wayne County schools.
3. To conduct an in-service training program for the teachers of these children in ways of implementing the proposed program.

An analysis of vocabulary development, experience background, and progress in school of all primary grade pupils was conducted in February 1966. The vocabulary section of the Stanford Benet Intelligence Test was administered to identify the level of vocabulary development of each child. A revised form of the Smith Experience Inventory was individually administered to each child. The test scores from the Metropolitan Readiness Test and California Achievement Tests administered by the district, were examined. A similar testing program was conducted at a selected control school which was considered to be exemplary of an urban school. The results of these tests were compared.

These data revealed significant differences between vocabulary development of the children in Wayne County and those in the control population. A difference in experiential background was also noted. An appraisal of reading test scores showed close groupings in two areas - below average and above average with few or no students far above average and few through the middle. An analysis of individual scores showed a consistant correlation between experience background and vocabulary development of .68 which was significant at the .05 level.

On the basis of this information a five part program was designed to improve instruction:

1. A parent-teacher planning and communication program. The central objective of this program was to keep parents well informed on curriculum content and the time of its presentation during the year. Recommended as an action program was a monthly newsletter from each teacher discussing the past month's activities and the ensuing month's plans.
2. Excursion program. Special educational excursions emphasizing low contact areas in the evaluation and correlated curriculum areas were planned.
3. Pupil-team specialties program. This encouraged the development of special interest areas for teams of children. Art, music, science, etc. projects allowing children time to explore and develop greater understandings were proposed to enrich the child's experience background.
4. Resource utilization. Partly in connection with pupil team specialty and partly for classroom use a resource program was outlined. Lists of available community people were compiled as potential resource people. Films, filmstrips and video-taping were discussed as means of enriching experience.
5. Individualization and enriched reading programs. With the wide spread in basic ability and the generally close grouping of scores in reading as revealed by the achievement test scores, a program of greater individualization was outlined. This included reading readiness activities to be used in kindergarten and first grade, and special materials and methods for the developmental and recreational phase of reading in the primary grades. This included the use of programmed reading materials and many individualized activity materials.

Teachers were introduced to the programs and methods in a five day workshop in August of 1966. Individualized reading materials, resource lists and a communication to parents were prepared at the workshop.

Two other workshops were held for teachers in January and February of 1968. Reading readiness materials in the areas of auditory perception, visual perception, and language development were prepared. Also, number readiness materials were constructed. In February the Murphy-Durrell Reading Test was administered to all kindergarten children.

In May 1967 an evaluation of the project was conducted. Vocabulary quotient tests and reading readiness tests were administered.

An analysis of the vocabulary quotient scores revealed a raise in the mean from 100 to 112. This growth was significant at the .05 level. The Loa elementary mean raised from 93 to 102 while Bicknell's raised from 104 to 116. Median scores for the schools are perhaps more revealing. Bicknell had a median vocabulary quotient of 118 and Loa 112.

An analysis of the Murphy-Durrell scores showed similar gains. Two major areas of reading were examined; knowledge of phonemes and knowledge of letter names and forms. The district raw score on the phonemes section of the pre-test was 31, on the post-test 35. The letter names pre-test was 23.5 and the post-test mean was 31. When examined individually, reading readiness growth at the Bicknell kindergarten was significant at the .05 level.

The third year evaluation of the project was limited to the Bicknell Elementary School. Data were obtained concerning vocabulary growth and reading achievement of the first three classes in the project and two new first grade classes that entered the project since it began.

Vocabulary growth by the first grade group was significant to the .01 level of confidence, while growth for the three grades was significant at

the .05 level. Only 19% of the total sample fell below the national mean in 1968 testing, whereas 37% were below in 1966. When compared in 1968 with the control sample of the urban school, there was found to be no significant difference in mean vocabulary quotient, whereas in 1966 the Bicknell group scored significantly below the control group.

The "World to Us" Project

One interesting adjunct to the project developed at the Hanksville School. This is a small two teacher school including grades 1 through 8 with a total of 32 pupils. Hanksville is an isolated rural community in central Utah. As described by Mrs. Elaine Schwartz who operated the project, "Hanksville is a community surrounded by miles of sand and desert, flood threatened washes and deep canyons that have made travel tedious and time consuming in the past. Newer roads are now bringing Hanksville nearer to the outside world, but its 108 population is still 55 miles from the next small community. It is a very self-sufficient community, a community so steeped with the spirit of the rugged pioneer that it exists today only because of the dogged determination of its people."

In an attempt to adjust the regular school program to offset some of the disadvantages of isolation, the "World to Us" project was initiated by Mrs. Schwartz. This centered around the use of the amplified telephone to extend the community. During the three years of the project, children at the school talked with the mayor of a northern Utah city, governors of several western states, top figures in the entertainment and sports world, the dolphins at Marineland of the Pacific and to the Vice President of the United States. They established "companion" schools in New York City and Pojoaque, New Mexico. With pupils in these schools they exchanged letters, tapes and photography and, then, as a culminating activity talked to them

via amplified telephone. The boundaries of Hanksville were, indeed, extended to include, if not the world, at least the whole of the United States.

Strategies and Materials

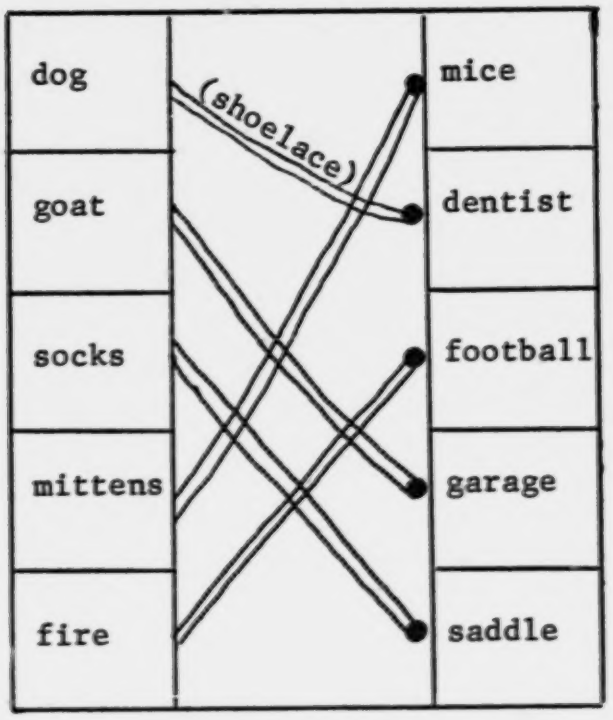
The strategies used in this project were listed under "the Project" section above. The parent teacher communication and individualization and enriched reading program were the most successful, probably because they were given the greatest emphasis.

Materials used by the teachers included commercially produced programmed reading materials as well as some developed by the teachers in workshops.

The following are some of the readiness materials constructed in the course of the project.

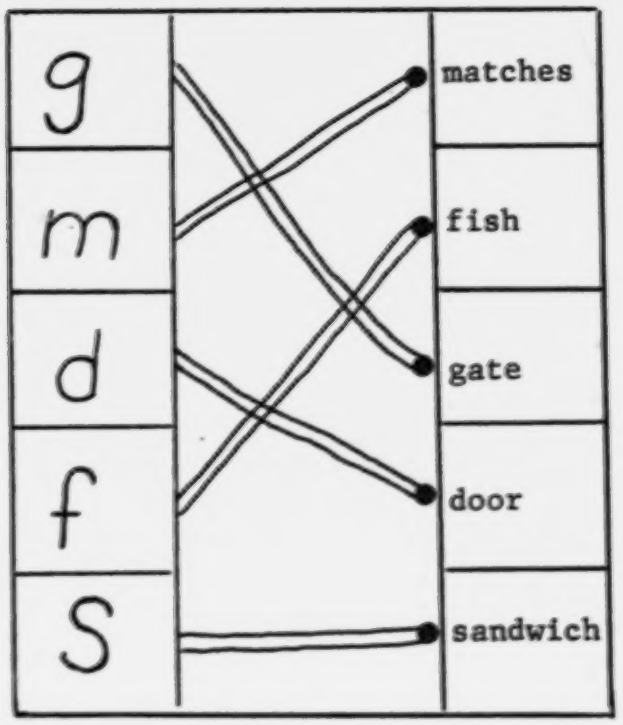
Auditory Lace

The board has pictures on the left whose beginning sounds match pictures on the right. A shoelace, attached on the left by each picture, can be threaded into holes on the right. At first the teacher would identify each picture and the children would listen for the same beginning sound and then match like sounds by lacing the shoelaces through the appropriate holes. Later, children could name the pictures themselves and listen for like sounds.



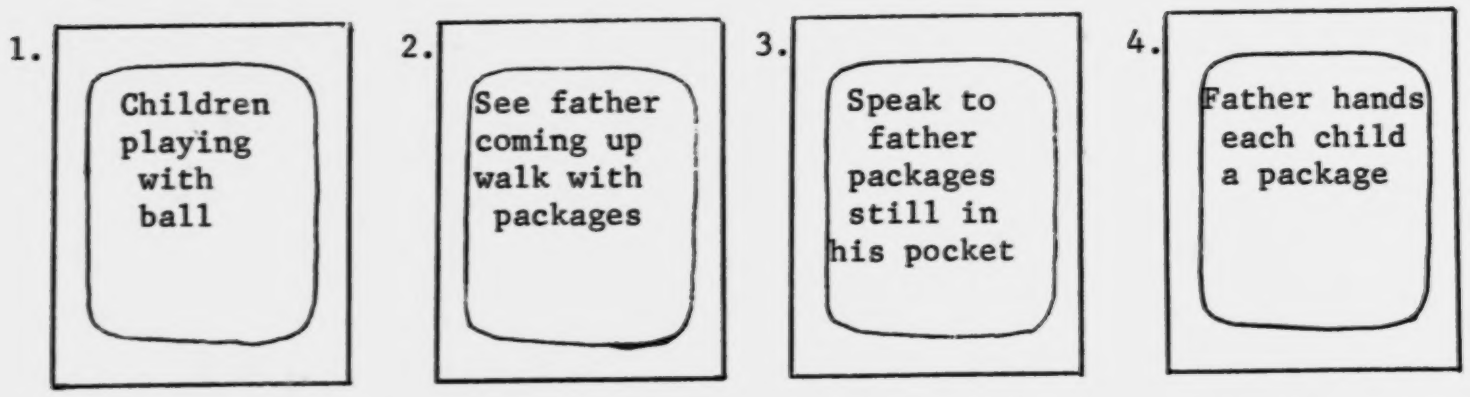
Phonic Lace

The board is similar to the auditory lace board except that on the left are alphabet letters which are to be matched with pictures on the right that begin with that letter. Again, they are matched by lacing shoelaces. After the child has listened to the teacher name the picture or named it himself, he finds the letter which indicates the beginning sound and laces the shoelace to join the two.



Sequence Games

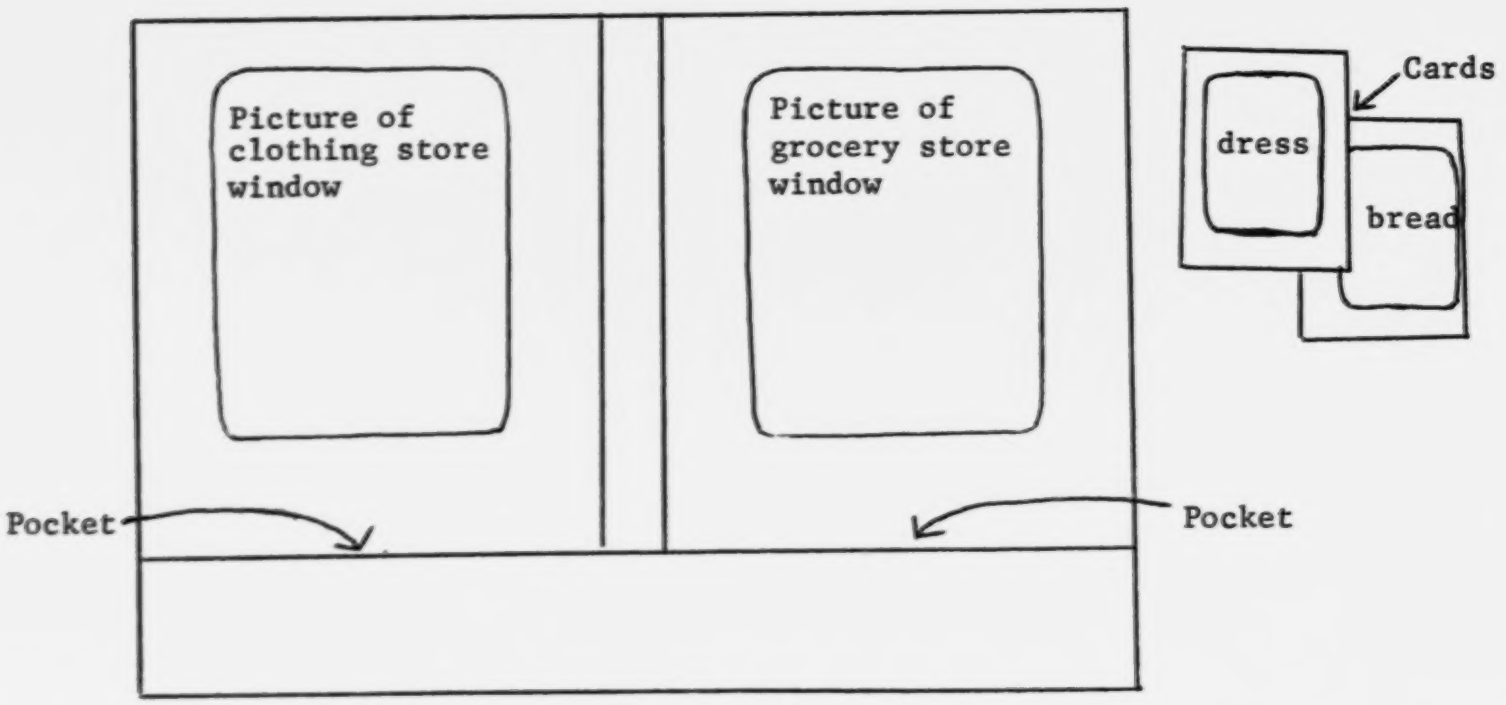
Children are given envelopes which contain four cards with pictures on them. The pictures tell a story. Children must look at the pictures, see the sequence of the story, and arrange the pictures from left to right so that they tell the story.



Cutting up a comic strip such as "Nancy" and having children put it back together in proper sequence is another possibility.

Relationship Games

A. The board is divided, with a pocket at the bottom of each picture. Children are given 20 cards, half of which show pictures of items which would be bought in a clothing store and the other half showing items which would be bought in a grocery store. Children put each card in the pocket under the appropriate picture.



B. Classifying Game

Children are given cards containing pictures of animals. They sort them according to any one of a number of classifications such as (1) animals which have fur, (2) jungle animals, (3) mammals, (4) farm animals, (5) circus animals, (6) animals which swim, etc.

C. Which Go Together? Game

Children are given an envelope containing cards with pictures, such as pictures from The Three Bears (i.e., 3 pictures of chairs, 3 pictures of bears, 3 pictures of beds, and 3 pictures of bowls). They then sort them into piles according to any of a number of relationships such as (1) all the chairs together, (2) all the bowls together (3) 1 bear with its appropriate bowl, chair, and bed, (4) all the beds together (5) all the bears together, etc.

D. Relationship Lace

Board is same as for auditory lace except that on the left are pictures of mother animals and on the right are pictures of baby animals. Children match mother with baby by lacing shoelaces.

E. Relationship Peg

Board contains sets of pictures, three of which are related. Below each picture is a hole into which a peg can be placed. Children look at the set of pictures and place pegs either under the three that are related or under the one that is not related.

Playing Cards

A. Auditory Perception Cards

Included in this set are 44 cards displaying pictures of items which represent the sounds that accompany the following consonants: c (castle, cowboy, coat, cake, for instance), d, f, g, h, w, l, m, p, r, and s. In addition one card displaying an ape is included to be used as a foil or odd card for some activities.

Before using the cards, each initial consonant exercised in this set should be developed. When this level is reached, the following games can be played with the cards:

1. Auditory Match (2 or more participants)

   Shuffle and spread cards face down on a table. Take turns viewing 2 cards for possible match of pictures with the same beginning sound. When a match is made, the child keeps the cards and takes an additional turn. Continue until all cards are matched.

2. Auditory Fish (2 or more participants)

   Shuffle and deal cards to players. Match pairs by the initial sounds of those dealt. Then each player takes a turn asking (fishing) for the sound he needs to make a match by asking one person for a card representing the sound he needs, i.e., "I am fishing with John for something that begins like boat." If he makes a match he places them in his score pile. Match or no match, each player receives only one turn at a time. Play continues until all cards are matched. The player with the largest number of pairs is the winner.

3. Auditory Maid (2 or more participants)

   Include the odd card (ape) in this game. Shuffle and distribute the cards as evenly as possible. Match pairs by initial sound from those dealt, then each takes a turn drawing from the person on his left and attempting to make a match. Play continues until all cards are matched and one player is left with the ape.

4. Auditory Postman (1 or more participants)

   Place 11 small boxes about the room. On the front of each box place a card from each of the 11 sounds presented in this set. Mix the remaining cards, then allow one, two, or three children to deliver them to the mailbox with corresponding sounds.

B. Phonic Perception Cards

In set A are 22 cards displaying letters and 22 cards displaying pictures such as C c cow, cat; D d dog, dinosaur; and so on. Set B presents 11 other consonants and consonant digraphs. The same games that can be played with the auditory perception cards can be played with these cards.

1. Auditory Bingo

   This game is played just like regular bingo. The cards, however, have pictures instead of letters, in each square. The game can be played by having the teacher hold up a card with a D sound, for example. If the child has a picture with the same beginning sound, he puts a marker on it. Another variation would be to have markers with letters on them. The child could then independently match letter with picture.

2. Phonic Bingo

   This game is similar to Auditory Bingo except that instead of pictures the card has letters in each square. It is played the same way that auditory bingo is played.

3. Auditory Dice

Children play with two dice. On each side of the dice is a picture which matches in beginning sound with the pictures on the other dice. The child throws and tries to match beginning sounds. When he does, he gets a point. The dice are rotated around the circle of children, each getting one turn at a time.

4. Phonic Dice

This game is similar to auditory dice except that the faces of the dice each contain letters to be matched. It is played the same way Auditory Dice is played.